(b) if so, the reasons therefor;

(c) whether a proposal seeking early in-principle clearance of the above project has been received by Planning Commission;

(d) if so, whether the Ministry would ensure early in-principle clearance of the project which is lingering from the Ninth Plan of NEC; and

(e) if not, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PLANNING (SHRI V. NARAYANASAMY): (a) to (e) The matter has again been received from NEC on 5.6.2009 and the proposal is under active consideration of the Planning Commission.

Special category status to States

82. SHRI RAMA CHANDRA KHUNTIA: Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state whether Government is considering the demand of Orissa, Rajasthan and Bihar to declare these States are special category States considering their backwardness, poverty and under development?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PLANNING (SHRI V. NARAYANASAMY): Recently a request has been received for providing 'Special Category Status' to Bihar which is under examination. No proposal is under consideration of the Government at present to declare Orissa and Rajasthan as Special Category States.

Economic growth of country

83. SHRI RAMDAS AGARWAL: Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Planning Commission Deputy Chairperson, who returned from meeting of the Global Bankers in Washington, reportedly said that India's Economic Growth for 2008-09 would be 6 per cent not 7 per cent as projected earlier by India;

(b) whether he blamed the slow down in the manufacturing sector as a main cause for the fall in the economic growth which was close to 9 per cent in 2007-08; and

(c) if so, the steps the Planning Commission and the RBI have taken so far to reverse the trend and provide impetus to the manufacturing sector?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PLANNING (SHRI V. NARAYANASAMY): (a) and (b) The Deputy Chairman, Planning Commission, represented India at the meeting of the G20 Finance Ministers and Central Bank Governors in London on 12 – 16 March, 2009. Responding to various questions after the event, the Deputy Chairman had expressed the view that for the year 2008-09 the rate of growth of the Indian economy is likely to be lower than the earlier projections of around 7 per cent and may be around 6.5 per cent due to the on-going global economic slowdown. To restore our economic growth, decisive, coordinated and comprehensive action to boost demand and jobs would be needed.

(c) The Government and RBI have taken both fiscal and monetary measures in order to restore the growth momentum, including measures for providing impetus to manufacturing

sector. The fiscal measures, *inter-alia*, include increase in plan expenditure, reduction in indirect taxes, sector-specific measures for textiles, housing, infrastructure, automobiles, micro and small sector and exports, authorisation to specified financial institutions to raise tax free bonds to fund infrastructure projects, farm loan waiver package, etc. The monetary and credit related measures taken by the RBI relate to provisioning of adequate liquidity and credit delivery, progressive reduction in the Repo rate under the liquidity adjustment facility (LAF), reduction in cash reserve and statutory liquidity ratios (CRR and SLR) for banks, etc. These measures have been supplemented with sector specific credit measures for exports, housing, micro and small enterprises and infrastructure.

Investment in S&T research

84. SHRI N.R. GOVINDARAJAR: Will the Minister of SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that the investment in the field of Science and Technology and development in our country is very low as compared to the other developing countries;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) whether there is slow progress in Scientific Research activities as the number of Research papers in India in the past 10 years has increased from 11,000 to 19,000 as compared to China during the same period and the number of Scientific Research papers has jumped from 10,000 to 55,000; and

(d) if so, the steps taken by Government to increase the investment in Science and Technology Research?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY (SHRI PRITHVIRAJ CHAVAN): (a) and (b) According to available official statistics, the investment in the field of Science and Technology as percentage of Gross Domestic Product (GDP) is 0.88% which is lower compared to that of China and Hungary where it is 1.42% and 1.00% respectively. But it is higher compared to several developing countries like, Brazil, Pakistan, Sri Lanka, Argentina, Mexico and Venezuela. In absolute terms, India's R&D investment has increased over the years from Rs. 18,088.16 crores in 2002-03 to Rs. 28,776.65 crores in 2005-06 and is estimated to be of the order of Rs. 37,777.90 crores in 2007-08.

(c) and (d) As per the Science Citation Index (SCI) database, the number of scientific research papers in India increased from 11,067 (in 1997) to 22,215 (in 2007). Whereas, in China, the research papers during the same period increased from 12,632 (in 1997) to 67,433 (in 2007). The Government have taken several measures for the promotion and growth of scientific research in the country. These measures include higher allocation for scientific research from Plan to Plan for setting up of new institutions for science education and research, creation of centres of excellence and facilities in emerging and frontline areas in academic and national